peoples — goals that are also part of the founding values of the United Nations.

"As an expression of these common objectives, in 1998 the International Olympic Committee decided to fly the United Nations flag at all competition sites of the Olympic Games. The United Nations system and the International Olympic Committee have subsequently strengthened their mutual cooperation and support through joint endeavours in fields such as poverty alleviation, human and economic development, humanitarian assistance, education, health promotion and HIV/AIDS prevention, gender equality and environmental protection.

"As President of the General Assembly at its sixty-second session, I solemnly appeal to all Member States to demonstrate their commitment to the Olympic Truce for the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, and to undertake concrete actions at the local, national, regional and world levels to promote and strengthen a culture of peace and harmony based on the spirit of the Truce."

May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to take note of the solemn appeal in connection with the observance of the Olympic Truce?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 45 and of agenda item 45 as a whole?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 114 (*continued*)

Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments

(i) Approval of the appointment of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Note by the Secretary-General (A/62/913)

The Acting President: By its resolution 48/141 of 20 December 1993, the General Assembly decided to create the post of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. The Secretary-General proposes, in the light of the provisions of resolution 48/141 set out in his note, to appoint Ms. Navanethem Pillay of South Africa as United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights for a term of office of four years beginning on 1 September 2008 and expiring on 31 August 2012.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to approve the proposal of the Secretary-General to appoint Ms. Navanethem Pillay of South Africa as United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights for a term of office of four years beginning on 1 September 2008 and expiring on 31 August 2012?

It is so decided.

The Acting President: I call now on the representative of France, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Western European and other States.

Mr. Lacroix (France) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of Western European and other States.

The Group of Western European and other States welcomes the appointment by the Secretary-General of Ms. Navanethem Pillay to the post of United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. We welcome the fact that this high responsibility is being entrusted to a woman from a country of the South and, in particular, from Africa. In this year, when we celebrate the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, it is vital to reaffirm the universality and the indivisibility of human rights in all their aspects.

We are confident that Ms. Navanethem Pillay, who has especially distinguished herself in combating impunity in the past as President of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, and now as a judge of the International Criminal Court, will be particularly attentive to the need for universality, which is at the heart of her mandate. In that vital mission, the new High Commissioner can count on the full support of the Group of Western European and other States.

The Group of Western European and other States would also like to pay hearty tribute to the work done by Ms. Louise Arbour at the head of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. With a great sense of dialogue and exceptional determination, Ms. Arbour was able throughout her tenure to develop a relationship of trust with the new Human Rights Council. We welcome her unflagging commitment and convey to her our gratitude.

The Acting President: I call next on the representative of Ethiopia, who will speak on behalf of the Group of African States.

Mr. Botora (Ethiopia): It is my distinct honour and pleasure to speak on behalf of the African Group of States in this special meeting of the General Assembly convened to consider, among other things, the approval of the appointment of a distinguished African daughter — Judge Navanethem Pillay — to one of the high posts of the United Nations — High Commissioner for Human Rights. It is indeed an important appointment, which recognizes the significant role played by Judge Pillay in the international legal and human rights arena. The appointment is also a concrete expression of the fact that Africa has continued to become, more than ever before, a decisive force in international affairs. In that regard, I wish to express our heartfelt appreciation to the Secretary-General for his recognition of Judge Pillay's important work in upholding the principles of the rule of law and in the defence of human rights and, through her, the importance of Africa's contribution to the protection, respect and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The world today is still in the process of profound and complex changes. The challenges of climate change, rising food and energy prices and the upswing in conflicts and violence are confronting our world in an unprecedented manner. Those challenges have a direct bearing on the international efforts to create a world order in which the basic rights of human beings are protected and promoted without any discrimination whatsoever. Such a world is critical to the full realization of the fundamental principles and goals set forth by the United Nations Charter for the maintenance of international peace and economic and social development.

Within that context, it is obvious that Judge Pillay's new job is most difficult and challenging and demands the full backing and cooperation of the international community. We are confident that Africa and the rest of the international community will stand at her side and extend the necessary support to her in accomplishing the important task entrusted to her by the world body.

Judge Pillay is one of South Africa's leading female jurists and has dedicated her life to the cause of upholding the rule of law and human rights. Her contributions to the struggle to end the apartheid regime, her achievements as a successful lawyer of human rights and as the first female attorney in her province, and her work at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda and the International Criminal Court bear witness to that. We believe that her appointment will afford her another great opportunity to bring the weight of her experience to bear on the efforts being employed by the international community to bring about a world of peace, justice and equality.

Today, we witness with agony the many human rights violations that gravely affect the fabric of international society. Despite the fact that we have succeeded in putting in place institutions and mechanisms to defend and promote human rights, at both the international and the national levels, human beings throughout the world, to varying degrees, have continued to suffer from violations of their dignity, basic rights and freedoms. In view of that grave peril, the world community should take concrete measures to guarantee the full protection, respect and enjoyment of human rights and freedoms for all. This is the time to renew our commitment and to redouble our efforts on behalf of the noble cause of human rights as we celebrate the sixtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The United Nations cannot discharge its full responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security or for achieving sustainable socio-economic development if proper and appropriate attention is not accorded to human rights. It is therefore fitting to appoint Judge Pillay to this supreme and challenging post, as her commitment to the defence and promotion of human rights and her integrity and personality are well recognized internationally.

In conclusion, I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate Judge Pillay on her appointment to this high post and once again to reiterate our appreciation to the Secretary-General for his judgement and right choice in nominating her as High Commissioner for Human Rights.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Barbados, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States.

Mrs. Francis-Vaughan (Barbados): Barbados has the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States on the occasion of the

approval by the General Assembly of the appointment of Judge Navanethem Pillay of South Africa to the post of United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. The Group congratulates Judge Pillay and welcomes her appointment to that important post within the United Nations system.

In welcoming Judge Pillay, the Group also wishes to extend its sincerest gratitude and appreciation to her predecessor, High Commissioner Louise Arbour, for her dedicated and distinguished service in leading the United Nations human rights efforts.

Judge Pillay easily exceeds the criteria for appointment to that post, as set out in resolution 48/141. Judge Pillay brings to that post wisdom and experience gained in over four decades in the area of law and human rights. From her early work in South Africa, where she represented many opponents of apartheid, to her more recent work as a judge on the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda and, later, the International Criminal Court, Judge Pillay has demonstrated a deep commitment to upholding the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The Group is confident that, given Judge Pillay's outstanding reputation and demonstrated ability as a leader and advocate for human rights, she will ensure that the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights fully delivers on its mandate to promote and protect the enjoyment and full realization by all people of all the rights established in the Charter of the United Nations.

The Group pledges its support and cooperation to the High Commissioner in the discharge of her duties and responsibilities and once again offers her our heartfelt congratulations.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Cuba, who will speak on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Mrs. Núñez Mordoche (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): I am privileged to speak on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement on this occasion as the Assembly is meeting to approve the appointment of Ms. Navanethem Pillay as the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

The Non-Aligned Movement takes this opportunity to congratulate Ms. Pillay on her appointment. The Non-Aligned Movement would like to welcome her and offer her our full support and cooperation. She is an illustrious representative of South Africa, which is an emblematic and staunch member of our Movement. The Non-Aligned Movement fully believes that Ms. Pillay will meet the major political challenges ahead of her as a result of her new and important responsibilities. We are convinced that she will promote the implementation of the tenets of the Non-Aligned Movement, which reject and condemn selectivity and double standards in the promotion and protection of human rights, and ensure that human rights will not be exploited for political reasons.

We are all aware of the enormous challenge Judge Pillay faces in fulfilling her mandate. However, her proven and well-known qualities will ensure her complete success in her task. Moreover, we fully believe that Ms. Pillay, as a noble daughter of the African continent, will continue to use the age-old wisdom of her people to strengthen the system of United Nations cooperation in promoting human rights and resolving any issues that confront her.

The Movement of Non-Aligned Countries also expresses its gratitude for the work undertaken by Ms. Louise Arbour as United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights; with her experience and her skill, she contributed to the cause of strengthening United Nations cooperation on human rights. Ms. Arbour will always be remembered as the High Commissioner who brought change and achieved the complex and sensitive establishment of the new Human Rights Council. On this occasion, we also recall all her efforts and the process that she has already initiated for celebrating the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

On behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, I wish Ms. Louise Arbour every success in her future endeavours and her personal life. We also wish Judge Navanethem Pillay every success as the new High Commissioner for Human Rights, and reiterate the full support and cooperation of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. The Movement reiterates its commitment to promoting a world of dignity and respect for all, and we reaffirm that we shall continue to work with all those committed to making cooperation on the defence of human rights throughout the world a reality.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Estonia, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States.

Mrs. Intelmann (Estonia): I have the honour to take the floor on behalf of the members of the Group of Eastern European States and, on behalf of the Group, I would like to congratulate Judge Pillay on her appointment. Her distinguished career and outstanding reputation give us confidence that she will be a courageous and vocal High Commissioner.

I would also like to take this opportunity to extend sincere gratitude and appreciation to High Commissioner Louise Arbour for her very dedicated service. Members of the Group of Eastern European States pledge their support and cooperation to the new High Commissioner.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of South Africa.

Mr. Kumalo (South Africa): On behalf of South Africa, allow me to express our deep gratitude to the members of the General Assembly for unanimously approving the appointment of Judge Navanethem Pillay as the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights for a term of office of four years beginning 1 September 2008 and expiring on 31 August 2012. At the same time, we wish to pay tribute to Ms. Louise Arbour, the outgoing United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, for her sterling work.

The General Assembly has endorsed someone who for many years lived under the cruel system of apartheid and, as a lawyer and human rights activist, stood up without fear or favour to represent its countless victims, especially the political prisoners on Robben Island. Judge Pillay was responsible for one of the landmark rulings against the apartheid system, in which Robben Island prisoners were allowed visits from their lawyers and families, thereby exposing the inhuman conditions for those held in apartheid jails.

Judge Pillay's advocacy for human rights has not been limited to South Africa. She is an internationally renowned jurist, who has served as a judge of the South African High Court, a founding judge and later President of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, and Judge of the International Criminal Court.

In the Rwanda Tribunal, Judge Pillay sentenced to life imprisonment Mr. Jean-Paul Akayesu, who was convicted of genocide, crimes against humanity and rape. That judgement was the first pronouncement on genocide by an international court since the Genocide Convention of 1948. The judgement defined, for the first time, the legal elements of the crime of genocide and the criteria constituting the categories of national, religious, racial and ethnic groups. The judgement also set a precedent by convicting Mr. Akayesu of rape as an act of genocide after having found that rapes were perpetrated against Tutsi women with the intention of the destruction of the Tutsi ethnic group.

Sixty years ago, the Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. That common standard of achievement, as it was called in 1948, placed the equality, dignity and worth of the human person at the core of the international community's attention. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights exhorts us to promote respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and, by progressive measures, both internationally and nationally, to secure their universal recognition and observance.

Fifteen years ago, in 1993, the General Assembly adopted the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action. The Declaration affirms the right to development as a universal and inalienable right and an integral part of fundamental human rights. At the same time, the Assembly created the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to spearhead the campaign of translating those ideals into reality.

The High Commissioner is the principal United Nations official mandated with promoting and protecting the enjoyment of all human rights by all. That includes dealing with the challenges to the full realization of human rights, as well as preventing the continuation of human rights violations throughout the world. The achievement of that mandate requires a person of high moral standing and personal integrity.

Judge Pillay brings personal experience, knowledge and the courage to fight for the promotion and protection of all human rights, including the right to development. The independence and fearlessness that Judge Pillay has demonstrated assure us of her commitment to put the individual at the centre of the human rights agenda. Her knowledge and her practical experience of working internationally with diverse

cultures confirm that the Secretary-General has made the right choice and, indeed, that the General Assembly has taken the correct position by unanimously endorsing Judge Pillay. For us South Africans, we simply wish to thank the Secretary-General and the Members of the Assembly, particularly the Non-Aligned Movement and the other groups that have spoken this morning, for having faith in one of us. In doing so, they have honoured all of us.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (i) of agenda item 114 and agenda item 114 as a whole?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 7 (*continued*)

Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items

The Acting President: Representatives will recall that, at its 3rd plenary meeting on 21 September 2007, the General Assembly allocated agenda item 137 to the Fifth and Sixth Committees. In order to enable the General Assembly to consider document A/62/914, containing a letter from the Permanent Representative of Germany to the President of the General Assembly under agenda item 137, it will be necessary to consider that item directly in plenary meeting.

May I take it that the Assembly agrees to consider this item directly in plenary meeting?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: May I further take it that the Assembly agrees to proceed immediately to the consideration of agenda item 137?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 137 (*continued*)

Administration of justice at the United Nations

Letter dated 9 July 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Germany addressed to the President of the General Assembly (A/62/914)

The Acting President: In his letter, the Permanent Representative of Germany requests the re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Administration of Justice at the United Nations for one meeting, to be held on one day between 21 July and 7 August 2008, for the sole purpose of taking note of the oral report of the coordinator on the informal intersessional consultations and to request the Secretary-General to issue the coordinator's summary entitled "Coordinator's summary of the preliminary observations made in the informal consultations on the draft statute of the United Nations Dispute Tribunal and the United Nations Appeals Tribunal" as an addendum to the report of the Ad Hoc Committee (document A/63/55).

May I therefore take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to re-establish the Ad Hoc Committee on the Administration of Justice at the United Nations for one meeting, for the sole purpose of taking note of the oral report of the coordinator on the informal intersessional consultations and to request the Secretary-General to issue the coordinator's summary entitled "Coordinator's summary of the preliminary observations made in the informal consultations on the draft statute of the United Nations Dispute Tribunal and the United Nations Appeals Tribunal" as an addendum to the report of the Ad Hoc Committee (document A/63/55)?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 137.

Agenda item 168

Extension of the terms of the judges of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States between 1 January and 31 December 1994

Letter from the Secretary-General (A/62/896)

Letter from the President of the Security Council (A/62/910)

The Acting President: In document A/62/896, the Secretary-General transmitted a letter dated 6 June 2008 from Judge Dennis Byron, President of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, in which he seeks authorization for an extension of the terms of office of nine permanent judges and eight ad litem

judges, whose terms expire on 31 December 2008. The President of the Tribunal seeks for each of those judges an extension to 31 December 2009, or until the completion of the cases to which they are assigned if sooner. As a contingency against the unexpected, he also seeks an extension to 31 December 2009 of the terms of the remaining nine ad litem judges who are not yet appointed to serve the Tribunal.

As the statute of the International Tribunal does not provide for extending the term of office of the permanent or ad litem judges, the approval of the Security Council, as the parent organ of the International Tribunal, and of the General Assembly, as the organ that elects its judges, would be needed.

In document A/62/910, the President of the Security Council transmits to the President of the General Assembly the text of Council resolution 1824 (2008) of 18 July 2008, whereby the Council, inter alia:

> "1. Decides to extend the term of office of the following permanent judges at the Tribunal who are members of the Appeals Chamber until 31 December 2010, or until the completion of the cases before the Appeals Chamber if sooner:
>
> – Mr. Mehmet Güney (Turkey)
>
> – Ms. Andrésia Vaz (Senegal)
>
> "2. Decides to extend the term of office of the following permanent judges at the Tribunal who are members of the Trial Chambers until 31 December 2009, or until the completion of the cases to which they are assigned if sooner:
>
> – Mr. Charles Michael Dennis Byron (Saint Kitts and Nevis)
>
> – Mr. Asoka de Silva (Sri Lanka)
>
> – Mr. Sergei Alekseevich Egorov (Russian Federation)
>
> – Ms. Khalida Rachid Khan (Pakistan)
>
> – Mr. Erik Møse (Norway)
>
> – Ms. Arlette Ramaroson (Madagascar)
>
> – Mr. William Hussein Sekule (United Republic of Tanzania)
>
> "3. Decides to extend the term of office of the following ad litem judges, currently serving at the Tribunal, until 31 December 2009, or until the completion of the cases to which they are assigned if sooner:
>
> – Ms. Florence Rita Arrey (Cameroon)
>
> – Ms. Solomy Balungi Bossa (Uganda)
>
> – Ms. Taghrid Hikmet (Jordan)
>
> – Mr. Vagn Joensen (Denmark)
>
> – Mr. Gberdao Gustave Kam (Burkina Faso)
>
> – Mr. Lee Gacuiga Muthoga (Kenya)
>
> – Mr. Seon Ki Park (Republic of Korea)
>
> – Mr. Emile Francis Short (Ghana)
>
> "4. Decides to extend the term of office of the following ad litem judges, who have not yet been appointed to serve at the Tribunal, until 31 December 2009, or until the completion of any cases to which they may be assigned if sooner:
>
> – Mr. Aydin Sefa Akay (Turkey)
>
> – Ms. Karin Hökborg (Sweden)
>
> – Ms. Flavia Lattanzi (Italy)
>
> – Mr. Kenneth Machin (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
>
> – Mr. Joseph Edward Chiondo Masanche (United Republic of Tanzania)
>
> – Tan Sri Dato' Hj. Mohd. Azmi Dato' Hj. Kamaruddin (Malaysia)
>
> – Mr. Mparany Mamy Richard Rajohnson (Madagascar)
>
> – Mr. Albertus Henricus Johannes Swart (Netherlands)
>
> – Ms. Aura E. Guerra de Villalaz (Panama).

If there is no objection, I propose that the Assembly decide to endorse this recommendation of the Secretary-General, which was endorsed by the Security Council in its resolution 1824 (2008) of 18 July 2008, and that it take effect as of 1 January 2009.

It was so decided.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 168?

It was so decided.

Statement by the President

The Acting President: Before concluding, I wish to announce that this is the last meeting of the General Assembly for Ms. Margie Kam, Senior Political Affairs Officer of the General Assembly Affairs Branch of the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Management. Ms. Kam has worked at the United Nations for more than 30 years, the majority of which have been associated with the work of the plenary of the General Assembly. Her contribution to the smooth running of meetings of the Assembly has been truly significant, and I would like the Assembly to give her a round of applause in appreciation. We wish her all the best.

The meeting rose at 11.05 a.m.